Duplicates Continuation of

FACTS AND FALLACIES

ABOUT

Consolidation of Schools

IN

West Virginia

BY

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DEPARTMENT OF FREE SCHOOLS

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THE SMALL SCHOOL PROBLEM.

1, 3, 4 and 5 are Examples of the Many Small, Expensive, Lonesome Schools; 2 is a "Fifth Grade" Where Competition is Small. Consolidation is the Solution.

Introductory.

The biggest fact about consolidation of rural schools in West Virginia is the rural school itself. It is the greatest institution of rural life. You live in the country. Are you satisfied with your school? Is it as good as you want for your boy or your girl? Do you think it is preparing your children to take their places in the affairs of men and live happy, useful lives? If not, what do you propose as the remedy? It may be that you have the best school that it is possible to provide for your particular community. It may be possible to repair the building, decorate the walls, secure better school supplies, (including library books), improve the school grounds by clearing them of rubbish and fencing them, employ a better teacher, and by doing some or all of these things improve your school very greatly.

On the other hand it may be that the best way to secure a better school for your children is to provide for them a different kind of school; that is, what is commonly called a consolidated school, where two or more schools like yours are united to form a school of two or more rooms under the same roof.

The biggest fallacy about consolidation of rural schools is expressed by those who say, "it can't be done". If I were threshing a crop of wheat with a flail when some one would come along and tell me that there is now a machine to do that work and I should say "It can't be done any other way", my statement would be no less wise than the one given above. Other communities have consolidated their schools under similar conditions. Therefore any community can consolidate its schools provided conditions are favorable.

Now it can be truly said that where conditions will permit, combining several small schools into a single graded school will greatly improve the educational advantages of that community. But we frankly admit that the majority of the rural schools in West Virginia cannot be consolidated. Hills may be in the way of such a plan and I dare say not many of us have faith sufficient to remove them. Distance between schools may prevent consolidation. Roads may be impassable. But where schools are grouped about community centers there is every reason why they should unite to make a better school than the one-room country school can possibly be made.

Facts About Consolidation.

1. Consolidation is one of the best means of providing better schools for the boys and girls of the country.

2. The one-room school is inadequate to the educational needs of these country boys and girls.

3. Consolidation has been in successful operation in some states for *over thirty years.*

4. Consolidation can be effected in a great many communities *without transportation of pupils.* The children are within walking distance of a central point where a new consolidated school ought to be established.

5. Every *unnecessary* country school costs the people of the district about $400. *This is money wasted.*

6. There are a great many country schools that do not have more than three to ten pupils. The education of these children costs the people from $40 to $133 each. Many of these children are within walking distance of nearby schools that are not crowded.

7. *One-hundred and twenty-eight* such schools in West Virginia have been closed within the past two years.

8. Better teachers will seek employment in a consolidated school.

9. No teacher can teach successfully all the subjects of the eight grades.

10. Consolidation with transportation greatly improves the attendance and almost completely eliminates tardiness.

11. A consolidated school with an auditorium affords a meeting place for the whole community.

Fallacies About Consolidation.

1. "They want to take our school away from us".

No. They are trying to provide a better school for your children.

2. "It will cost too much."

Well, one district supported last year nine schools for eighty children, all within walking distance of a central point. A teacher in a consolidated school can teach forty children. If these nine schools had been consolidated two teachers could have taught the eighty children and the other seven teachers could have taught where they were needed.

3. "You can't transport children to school over our roads."

It has been done in other districts in West Virginia for six years where the roads are no better.

4. "The children would freeze to death in the wagons."

No child has ever been known to freeze to death in a school wagon nor suffer seriously from the cold.

5. "The one-room school was good enough for me and it is good enough for my children."

But your father used the hand scythe to harvest his grass. Why do you use the mowing machine?

6. "It can't be done."

Are you willing to admit that your community cannot do what a great many other communities are doing right here in West Virginia? We are no longer looking to other states for instructions as to how consolidation can be effected. We have as good examples of its success at Sherrard, Marshall county, and Gary, McDowell county, as any state can boast of. Furthermore, some consolidation has been effected in almost every county of the state, as the account on the last pages of this booklet will show.

How to Consolidate Schools.

Consolidation of schools can be effected in at least three ways, as follows:

1. By closing up small schools and allowing the children thus affected to go to other nearby schools. If two or three schools near to each other are small, simply close one or two of them and let all the children go to the most central school. A board of education in Marion county did this very thing. Three schools were being maintained for a total of 28 pupils. Two of the schools were closed, all the children went to the most central school and the district actually saved $800 by this arrangement. And these 28 children had a better school for all that. Boards of education are not justified in spending the people's money to support schools that are not needed.

2. By abandoning several small one-room schools and building a central graded school. In a certain district five one-room schools are being supported for 51 pupils, all within two miles of a central point. By abandoning these five schools and building a central two-room building, two teachers could teach these 51 children and teach them much better than the five are now doing, and without extra

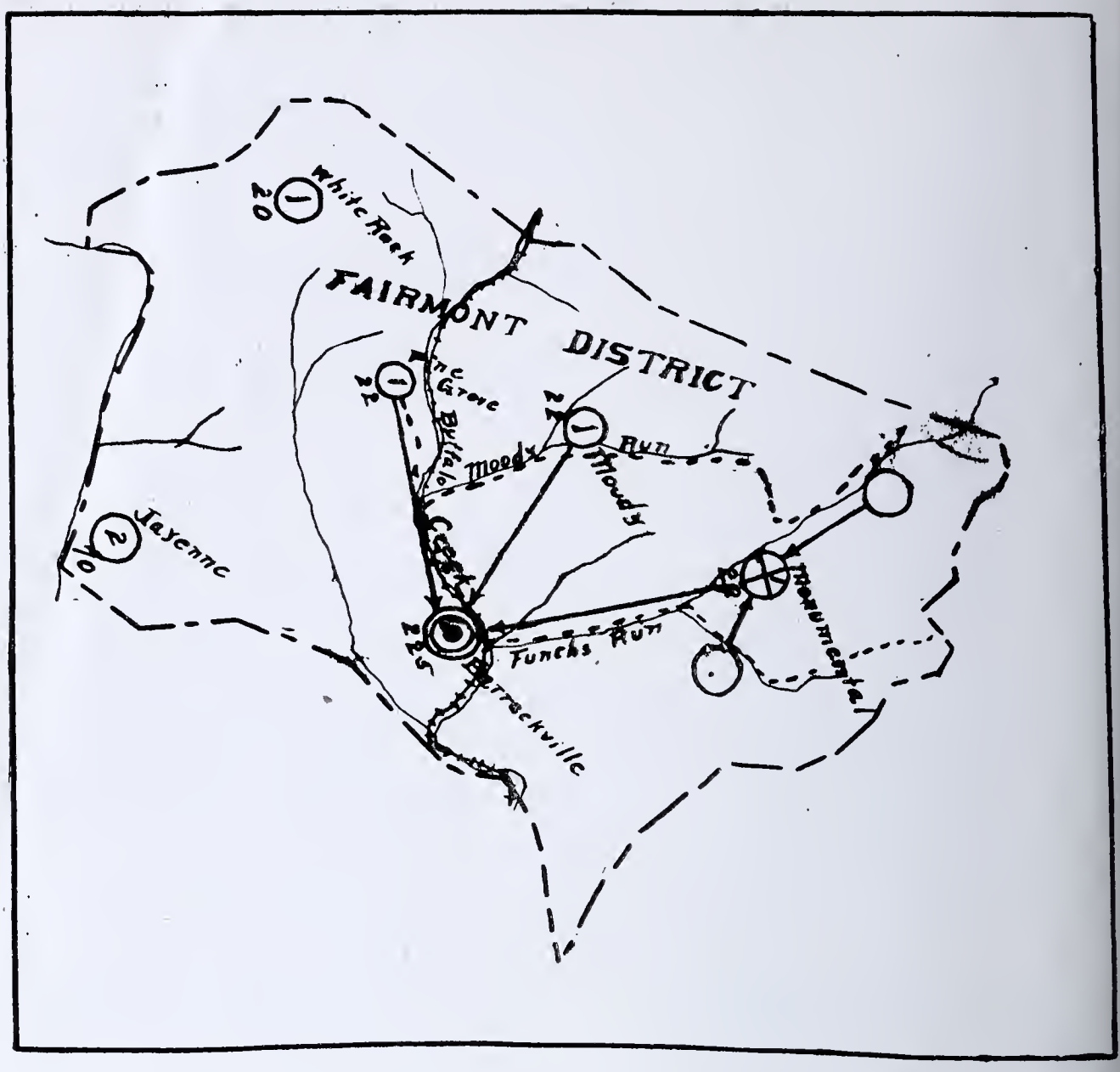


Diagram showing plan of Consolidating Small Schools as worked out in Fairmont District, Marion County (See Page 5.)

expense for transporting pupils because all of them are within easy walking distance of a central point where the new graded school should be provided.

We urge consolidation by these two methods wherever possible. We have in West Virginia at least five hundred small schools that are not actually needed. If each costs $400 per year, then we are spending in the neighborhood of $200,000 that might well be saved and turned to other good purpose.

3. The third method of consolidating schools is to establish a central graded school and transport the children from nearby schools by wagon or other conveyance to this central school. Where transportation is necessary a petition in writing of 75 per cent. of the voters of the sub-districts affected must be secured.

In providing for transportation of pupils it is the custom that the board of education furnish the wagons at public expense, the driver furnishing the team and doing the driving. The wagons cost about

$160, varying according to size. At Sherrard, Marshall county, six wagons are used to transport the children from six country schools. The longest haul is about four miles. The drivers are paid from $1.90 per day to $3.50, according to length of route and the condition of the roads.

If conditions are favorable to this method of consolidation it is the best method to adopt. No board is urged to undertake to do the impossible. But as a matter of fact the objections usually raised against consolidation gradually fade away as time goes on. The trouble is that we cannot understand just how a thing will work if we have not seen it at work. Once we see the thing done we are convinced.

Take for example the Sherrard consolidated school. Three years ago there was a one-room school in the village and seven one-room schools in the surrounding country. It was proposed that these eight schools be consolidated. Some said simply, "It can't be done". Others said that the roads were not good enough. It was finally agreed that the consolidated school should be established. The board of education agreed that the people should decide for themselves whether or not they would come to the school; that the school houses should be left as they were for a year, and that if the people did not like the new arrangement they might go back to their old school the next year. The voters of five of these outlying sub-districts petitioned the board to consolidate their schools, which with the Sherrard village school made six schools consolidated. At the end of the first year not one of these schools desired to go back to the old school house, and one of the two schools that had held out against consolidation the first year promptly petitioned the board to consolidate it with the Sherrard school the second year, which was done.

What has been done at Sherrard can be done in any community in which the schools are similarly situated. There are dozens of communities in the state that could do a similar thing. The people of Sherrard and the surrounding country had no special advantages over many other communities. Their roads were simply dirt roads such as are found in almost any section of the state. These roads get muddy in winter. The snow drifts in them just as in many other roads. And yet these wagons have passed over them every school day for two years. No one complains. In fact every one is pleased. For the patrons feel that they at last have just as good a school as any city can boast of anywhere. So they have, and their chil-

dren are no longer compelled to leave their homes and go to the city in order to receive a liberal education. For along with the graded school a First Class high school was established. The children of this rural community may now pass from the senior class of the Sherrard school to the freshman class of any standard college or university. Essentially the same thing is true at every other point where consolidation has been effected. There are now seventeen school wagons in the state: six at Sherrard, and one at Boggs Run, Marshall county; four at Gary, McDowell county; two in Preston county; two in Taylor county; one in Wood county; and one in Hardy county. Not a single one of these wagons is run over anything better than the ordinary dirt road.

THE BOGGS RUN SCHOOL, MARSHALL COUNTY.

A good example of a small Consolidated School with a minimum of expense for transportation. One wagon is used here.

Consolidations Effected and Graded Schools Built 1912 and 1913.

Following are brief statements of the consolidations effected and the graded schools built the years 1912 and 1913.

An inspection of the following individual county reports will show: (1) that there are a great many unnecessary one-room schools in the state, 178 having been abandoned during these two years, and yet, according to the statements of the county superintendents, 566 others might be abandoned; (2) that there is a strong tendency towards establishing small graded schools within walking distance of

the children, 67 two-room schools having been established within these two years; (3) that this movement for consolidation of one-room schools into small graded schools is state-wide, 43 different counties having reported some progress made in this direction within the two years.

Barbour—1912, one one-room school abandoned; one two-room graded school built, costing $2,100.

Boone—1912, 1 two-room graded school established taking the place of a one-room school. In 1913, 2 one-room schools were abandoned and 2 two-room schools established.

Braxton—1912, 2 one-room schools were abandoned. In 1913, 2 one-room schools were abandoned. No graded schools were built to take their places, the children being accommodated in nearby schools.

Brooke—No graded schools established but there has been much agitation for consolidating several small schools. Bad roads assigned as the principal reason for delaying the proposed action.

Cabell—In 1912, 1 two-room school and 1 three-room school established. In 1913, 1 two-room school was established, 1 one-room school being abandoned.

Calhoun—In 1913, 1 one-room school was abandoned and a two-room school established, the first attempt at consolidation in the county.

Doddridge—In 1912, 1 one-room school was abandoned and two two-room schools established. In 1913, 2 one-room schools were abandoned and 2 two-room schools established.

Fayette—A number of one-room schools have been abandoned and central graded schools erected. A number of pupils of the upper grades are transported by rail to the Oak Hill schools. It is planned to abandon 11 one-room schools next year and consolidate them into 3 graded schools. One wagon will be used next year.

Gilmer—In 1912, 1 one-room school abandoned and 1 two-room school established, 1913.

Greenbrier—In 1912, 2 one-room schools were abandoned and 2 two-room schools were established. In 1913, 1 two-room school and 1 four-room school were established.

Hampshire—Two one-room schools abandoned in 1912.

Hancock—Two new graded schools at Wierton and Newell, costing $20,000 each.

Hardy—One one-room school consolidated with Wardensville, one wagon being used to transport the pupils. This arrangement has been effective since 1909. In 1913, 1 one-room school was abandoned as unnecessary.

Harrison—In 1912, five one-room schools were abandoned. At Zeising a four-room school took the place of a one-room old school building. At Sardis a four-room building took the place of the old two-room building, the upper grades of several nearby country schools being transferred to this school. One colored school is transported by trolley to the Clarksburg city colored school, the tuition and transporation being much cheaper than running the one-room colored school. In 1913, 3 one-room schools were abandoned as unnecessary, the pupils being accommodated at nearby schools. There is a movement now to consolidate in 1914 all the schools in Elk district into 1 eight-room building, and provide also for high school work in this same building. There are nine one-room schools in this district.

Jackson—Nothing has ever been done towards consolidation.

Jefferson—In 1913, two one-room schools one mile apart were abandoned and a two-room graded school built midway between them, costing $2,500. At Leetown, four nearby one-room schools were abandoned and a central four-room school built.

Kanawha—Practically no consolidation has been effected, but five graded schools were built in 1913; four two-room buildings and one four-room building.

Lewis—There are ten two-room graded schools in the county, three of which were built in 1913, costing $1400 each. Three one-room schools were abandoned in 1913. There are five other prospects of consolidation in the county.

Lincoln—In 1913, one two-room school was established.

Logan—In 1912, two one-room schools and one two-room school were consolidated into a four-room school at Ethel. There were built also three two-room schools. In 1913, four two-room graded schools were established, and at Holden one four-room school, one three-room school, two two-room schools, and one one-room school in the immediate vicinity were con-

stituted one school under the direction of the principal of the main building, the children being distributed among these schools as best suited the convenience of all concerned, thus allowing better grading of the pupils and effective supervision.

Marion—In 1912, a four-room school supplanted a one-room school at Annabelle, two teachers employed, and at James Fork a four-room school took the place of a one-room school, three teachers employed. These are new mining towns, hence the necessity of larger school buildings. At Grangeville a two-room school took the place of a very old one-room building. In Fairmont district three one-room schools were combined into one school, using the central one-room building, there being a total of 28 children. A one-room school of 14 pupils was abandoned, the children being transported by trolley to a graded school. Also one colored school was abandoned, the children being transported by trolley to the colored school of the city of Fairmont, the Board of Education paying tuition and trolley fares. In 1913, two one-room schools were abandoned, the children being transferred to nearby schools without extra teaching force. New graded schools were built at the following towns: a two-room building at Watson, costing $4200, two rooms added to the graded school at Farmington, costing $4500; four rooms added to the graded school at Fairview, costing $1000; a new four-room building at Worthington.

Marshall—The Sherrard Graded and High School was opened the fall of 1912, six one-room schools being consolidated and five wagons being employed. In 1913 the patrons of another one-room school petitioned the Board to consolidate their school with this one. The petition was granted and another wagon provided. In this same district, Union, another one-room school was consolidated with the Boggs Run graded school, one wagon being used to transport the pupils. The county superintendent reports nine one-room schools will likely be consolidated with three graded schools soon.

Mason—In 1913, one one-room school was abandoned and one graded school established, a church having been purchased and made into a graded school.

Mercer—In 1912, a movement was begun in Rock District to reduce the number of teachers from 100 to 75. Eight have already

been dispensed with as unnecessary. The others will be retired as fast as the Board can raise funds to build the necessary graded schools. In 1913, 7 one-room schools were abandoned as unnecessary or consolidated with nearby schools. Two two-room graded schools have been built.

Mineral—Nothing has been done towards consolidation.

Mingo—In 1912, 1 one-room school was abandoned and 1 four-room school was established at a cost of $4000.

Monongalia—In 1912, 2 one-room schools were abandoned. One two-room graded school was established. In 1913, five one-room schools were abandoned and a three-room school established. For next year 7 one-room schools will be consolidated into a four-room school at Daybrook and two years of high school work provided.

Monroe—In 1913, five one-room schools were abandoned as unnecessary. A three-room consolidated school was established at Sweet Springs, consolidating three one-room schools, two teachers being employed.

Morgan—In 1912 one two-room graded school was established, costing $2800. In 1913, a consolidated and high school was established at Paw Paw, seven rooms, costing $17,300.

McDowell—McDowell county has probably built more graded schools within the past two years than any other county in the state. Some of these have been consolidated schools and some merely graded schools to meet the demands of the industrial centers. But since these have been built instead of the usual small schools in different places of the same community these graded schools are in effect consolidated schools. For it is better to build substantial graded schools in the first place than to build small schools temporarily and be compelled later to abandon these for central and larger buildings. During the summer of 1913 Browns Creek district alone built 26 new school buildings, most of which were substantial graded schools. McDowell county has three consolidated colored schools, one at Kimball and one at Keystone, each taking the place of three one-room schools, and one at Elkridge, 4 rooms, taking the place of 2 two-room schools. At Eckman a six-room brick school building takes the place of two two-room frame buildings. At Maybeury a new ten-room brick building takes the place of four two-room buildings. At Gary a

thoroughly modern twelve-room fire-proof building takes the place of five one-room and two-room buildings. Four wagons are employed to transport the pupils to this school.

Nicholas—In 1912, six one-room schools were abandoned. One two-room graded school was established at Dixie, costing $1500 and a two-room graded school established at Tipton, costing $1200. In 1913 a three-room school took the place of five one-room schools abandoned and at Buffalo two one-room schools were abandoned and a central one-room school took their place.

Ohio—In 1913, one one-room school was abandoned and one two room graded school established, costing $2000. There is a movement now to consolidate all the schools in Richland district into two central graded schools, employing transportation. This the coming summer.

Pendleton—Nothing has been done towards consolidation.

Pleasants—Nothing has been done towards consolidation.

Pocahontas—In 1912, one one-room school was abandoned, the pupils being transferred to a nearby school. In 1913, one one-room school was abandoned as unnecessary.

Preston—In 1912, two consolidated schools were established, one of six rooms at Albright and one of four rooms at Denver. Five one-room schools were abandoned. In 1913, five one-room schools were abandoned. A two-room school was established at Manown. Two wagons transport the pupils to the Manown school.

Putnam—Nothing has been done towards consolidation.

Raleigh—In 1912, three one-room schools were abandoned. Six two room buildings were constructed, costing about $1400 each, and two four-room graded schools were provided. In 1913, five one-room schools were abandoned. Two eight-room buildings were constructed at Mabscott and Eccles respectively, costing about $8000 each. Two rooms were added to the McAlpin School making it a four-room graded school. One additional room was built to Dorothy school making it a three-room graded school. One additional room was built to the Sprague school making it a two-room graded school.

Randolph—In 1912, one room was added to the one-room school at Lick, making it a two-room graded school. In 1913, seven one-room schools were abandoned. Two two-room graded schools were established at Elsmore and Dry Fork respectively.

Ritchie—In 1912, two one-room schools were abandoned and a three-room school built to take their place. Five other one-room schools abandoned. In 1913, two one-room schools were abandoned and a central two-room school established, costing $1800.

Roane—In 1912, one two-room graded school was built. In 1913 2 one-room schools were abandoned as unnecessary.

Summers—In 1913, two one-room schools were abandoned and two two-room graded schools built, one at Clayton and one at Hilldale.

Taylor—The consolidated graded schools at Webster and Simpson respectively are in successful operation, one wagon being used at each point. In 1912, one one-room school was consolidated with Tyrconnel and a four-room building was erected from the proceeds of a $6000 bond issue. Another one-room school was abandoned near Pruntytown, the pupils being transferred to Pruntytown graded school. Taylor was one of the first counties to effect consolidations. Altogether five graded schools have been established and six one-room schools abandoned. Other consolidation plans are now ripe for action.

Tucker—In 1913, one one-room school was abandoned, the pupils being transferred to the Parsons graded school; another one-room school was abandoned, the pupils going to the Hambleton graded school; and another was divided, the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grades remaining in the one-room school while the 4-8 grades were transferred to the Hendricks graded school. No extra teachers were required in either case, the pupils being distributed among the several grades.

Tyler—In 1912, two one-room schools were abandoned as unnecessary. A four-room addition was built to the Middlebourne graded school. In 1913, one one-room school with a total enrollment of eight pupils was dispensed with by a process of redistricting. Four consolidations are planned for next year, which, if successful, will merge eight one-room schools into these proposed consolidated schools.

Upshur—Nothing has been done towards consolidation.

Wayne—In 1912, seven one-room schools were abandoned. Three graded schools were established, one of three rooms and two of two rooms. In 1913, four one-room schools were aban-

doned and three two-room schools established. Several other consolidations are proposed for the near future.

Webster—No consolidations have been effected as yet but preliminary plans have been made to consolidate seven one-room schools with the Cowen graded and high school; three one-room schools with the Webster Springs graded and high school; three one-room schools and two two-room schools at Camden-on-Gauley; and four one-room schools at Erbacon.

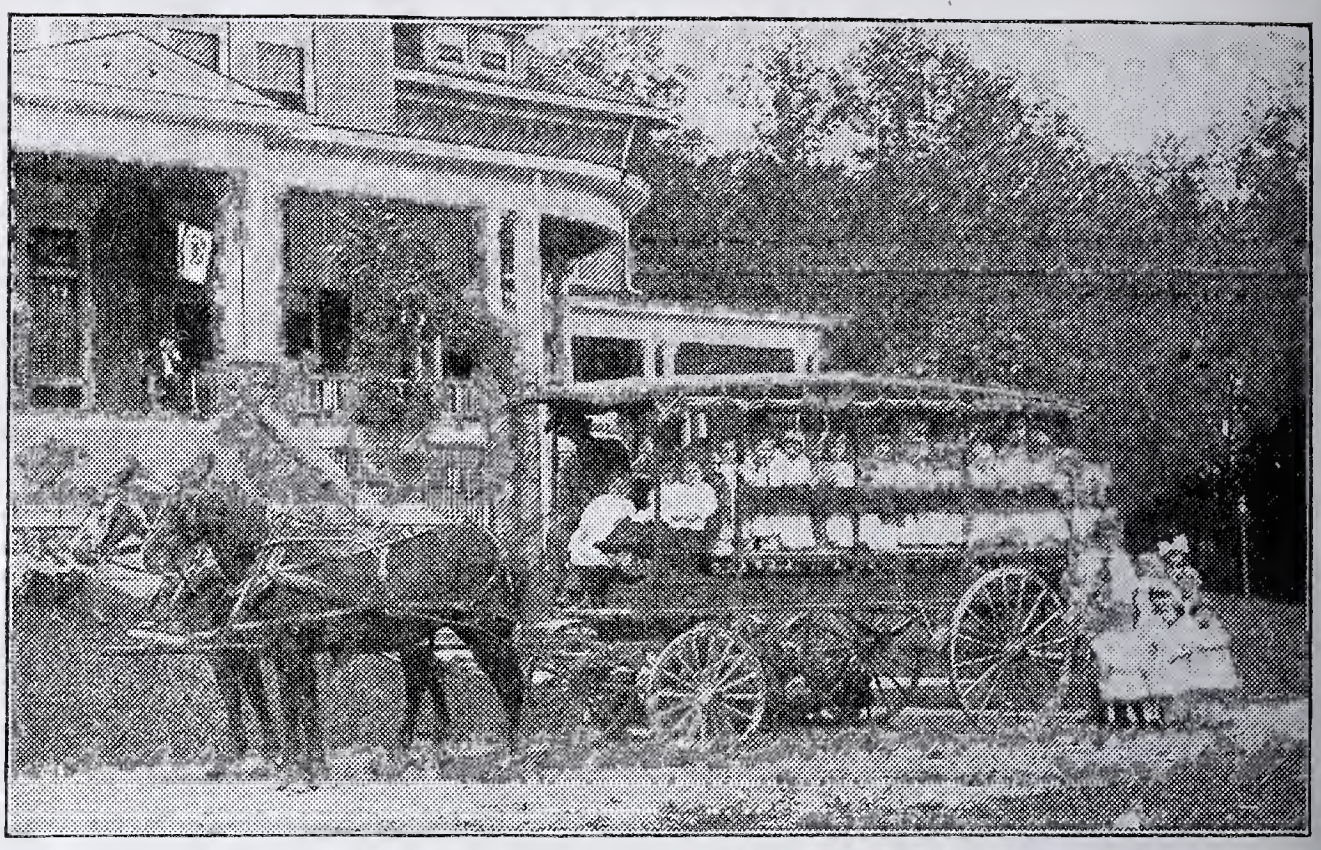
Wetzel—In 1912, four one-room schools were abandoned and two two-room graded schools were established in their stead. For the past six years the pupils of a one-room school near New Martinsville have been transported by trolley to the New Martinsville graded school. In 1913, one one-room school was abandoned as unnecessary.

Wirt—In 1912, a two-room graded school took the place of a one-room school at Burning Springs, the first consolidation in this county.

Wood—In 1912, one two-room graded school was established. In 1913, one one-room school was abandoned, the pupils being transported by wagon to the Williamstown graded school.

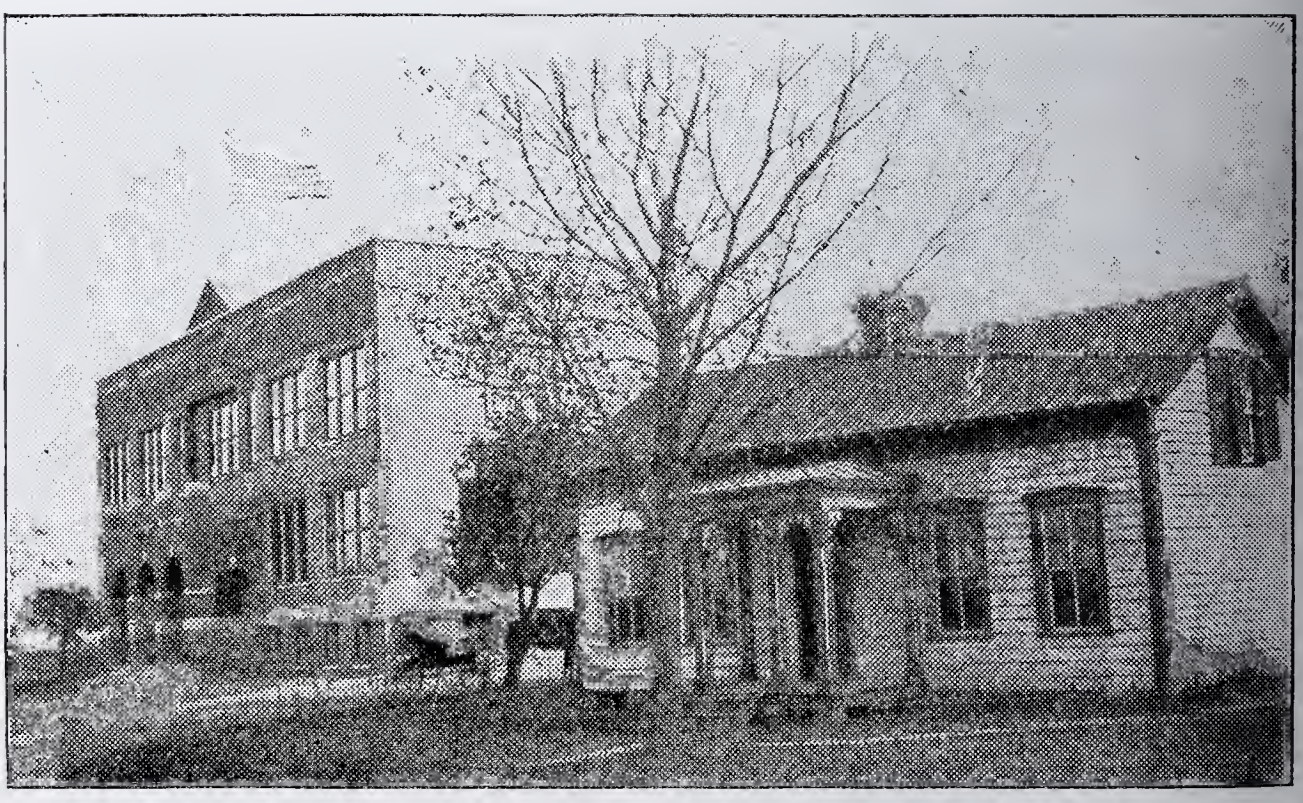
Wyoming—Nothing has been done towards consolidation.

Summary	1912	1913	Total
Number one-room schools abandoned.....	87	91	178
Number two-room schools established....	32	35	67
Number graded schools of more than two rooms.....	20	23	43
Number counties reporting some consolidations.....	31	36	43
Number school wagons running in the state	9	17	
Number one-room schools that could well be abandoned (estimated)			566



CHILDREN OF ODD FELLOWS' HOME

Ready to go to School at Elkins. They Believe in Consolidation.



APPROACHING THE IDEAL SCHOOL PLANT.

Sherrard Consolidated and High School, Marshall County, showing the Principal's Home at the right. Six wagons are used here.